

# WHO PAYS?

## When Justice Sleeps

By EDWIN BLISS

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### THIRD STORY

"We find the deceased came to his death by his own hands."

The jury coroner blinked at the speed with which his jury returned their verdict. Not that any other verdict was possible—everybody agreed as to that. A waste of time and public money—the two weeks' hearing. President Darius Brown was dead. There could be no doubt about it. He had been respected, living; dead, he was a knave. Gunshot wound experts and the mute, mechanical witness proved the jury correct in their finding.

Expert accountants, expert sleuths, layman witnesses showed conclusively the crookedness of the late Darius Brown. But the money he had filched from the bank funds and the securities he had borrowed from the vaults had been found beside his lifeless body. Depositors had lost nothing. Future depositors had gained an honest president. Darius Brown had lost his life. So why bother?

Nodding their heads sagely with the satisfaction of "having known all along," the audience left the stuffy room. Four of that audience slipped furtively out, as though fearing something invisible was dogging their footsteps, casting a chill shadow between their shoulder blades. But that is my story—the tale of the real happenings at the Fourth National.

I. President Darius Brown gradually permitted a broad smile of satisfaction to overspread his face as he studied the record of his first paying teller. He waved the Pinkerton representative, with the little bundle under his arm away, while he stared absently at the opposite wall, then pressed the annunciator and ordered the negro porter to send in Mr. Drum. "Go to the vault, Travers, and fix up the camera," he smiled at the Pinkerton man. "I'm just taking a minute to reward a young man who has helped get enough securities into that vault to make it worth guarding."

The detective glanced keenly at the young man who answered the summons, then his lips tightened a bit. He knew the face of Joseph Drum, had seen the young man mingling with a rather fast set, had marked his presence at the Gayety stage door. He was an old-school detective who believed the leisure hours of a banking man might be better employed.

Darius Brown noticed the look, the appraisal of the sleuth, and laughed as he whirled about upon his teller.

"Looking over the books and recollecting the circumstances attendant on certain deposits," he began ponderously, "I find that you have brought a good many customers to the Fourth National, Drum. I also am agreeably reminded that you have shown good judgment in advising depositors regarding certain investments they intended making. You are a bit gay, I know, but I have every reason to believe that you are careful, and I know you are working for the bank outside of hours. This is the twentieth century, Drum, and I am increasing your salary to five thousand dollars a year."

Joseph Drum's jaw dropped in amazed incredulity.

"Don't thank me," Brown said crisply. "Just continue to be careful. Be as gay as you please, so long as you're careful and it brings us the right sort of deposits and doesn't affect the clearness of your brain. And," he wagged a long forefinger rather playfully as he gave the warning, "don't wear out the bricks in front of the Gayety stage door."

"I don't think I'll need to make but one more trip there—now."

President Brown halted, his hand on the knob, as though to answer. Then he smiled as he understood the full meaning of Drum's cryptic rejoinder and joined the detective, who had just finished adjusting his apparatus in the door of the huge, black vault.

"It works this way, Mr. Brown," explained the man. "The camera slides into the steel mesh back here, giving the lens the angle to catch anybody tampering with the combination. Here are the triggers on each side of the door, all set, and the flash powder is placed in these little containers. Now, look! Here's the trick." He knelt a short way before the vault door, prying with his knife and finally drawing from place a loose tile. He smiled with satisfaction at the exclamation of admiration from President Brown as he looked into the aperture and saw the ingenious method in which the trigger, hidden there, was connected with the triggers beside the camera.

Carefully the detective replaced the tile, then drew away. His back suddenly stooped while a furtive, evil expression grew in his eyes as he slipped stealthily toward the safe. Without explanation, the bank president saw that he was simulating a burglar. He watched keenly, uttering

an ejaculation of surprised delight as the man's foot touched the loose tile and, simultaneously, the flash powder flamed from the door, leaving a plume of hot, acid smoke behind.

"And there you have the face of the bank thief!" he chuckled. "Very ingenious indeed!"

He smiled and turned away, closing the door behind him as he resumed his desk. For the hours of a bank executive are known to a man save himself. There were a few details of the business to be righted and then a study of the market—

Darius Brown's lips tightened as he went over again and again certain bewildering evolutions of stocks in which he was interested. Well, he would wait and see what he could make of them in the morning.

He began to wonder how he was to find that market pace of his paper at breakfast, he still had time to pause a while and smile at the simple announcement on the preceding page, of the marriage of Joseph Drum, paying teller of the Fourth National bank, to Miss Flo Williams, who had been lending her charms of face and figure to the show girl contingent of the Gayety theater.

II. Though he would have knocked down the man who even quailed him regarding his matrimonial judgment, Joseph Drum flushed as he reluctantly gave room to a traitorous thought in his mind. For weeks, for months he had felt the ground slipping beneath his feet, had seen the pyramid of debt piling higher and higher, yet had dared take no exact measurement of it, hoping against all reasonable hope that "something would turn up," to save him.

Five thousand dollars a year! What a huge sum it had seemed to them both! His lips curled in a bitter smile. Five thousand dollars a year and already, within a few months after marriage, his surplus savings had been wiped out, his salary spent, and he owed ten thousand dollars. And it was his own fault—be, the banker, his fault. It was a child he had married, a pampered, spoiled child.

A perfect wife she had made him, perfect save in her extravagance. And he had not warned at the time when warning would have been easy. Now, she would take it as a reproach. Now where could he hope to raise ten thousand dollars? How could he make the six hundred dollars in his pocket over into a sufficient sum to start him anew?

He pushed the tell-tale tabulation hurriedly aside as Flo swept into the bank and sought his cage. The old thrill of delight swept other thoughts aside as he revealed in the grace, the beauty of her, drank in deep drafts of the intoxicating devotion that cloved in her eyes as they found his own. He even smiled as, in her dear, wheedling way she slowly described the beauties of a pearl necklace, amazingly low-priced, she had



He Revealed in the Beauty of Her.

seen in the window of Lattimer's jewel shop. Drum was still smiling as his eyes followed her out of sight, then the smile disappeared as a movement of his hands brought the fatal inventory of debts to light again.

Not more closely did the closely meshed cage shut him away from those outside than his position debarred him from raising such an amount of money.

Even as he thought of substantial men's opinion of him, his brain, by some strange quip peculiar to those closely harassed, flew to Fred Williams—his brother-in-law. The acquaintance was but casual. The man was a gambler, a sporting man of a character such as would have made closer acquaintance impossible for a bank teller. Still, he had taken a liking to the man on the night of that wedding supper that had lasted till dawn. He had noticed that the gambler touched no liquor; that he skillfully managed to handle the other guests who had imbibed too freely.

There was something the air of a tomb about the office of John Field, confidential broker; there was something the sensation of being about a corpse when one transacted business with John Field.

To Field, everything was a problem—figures as well as men. And Field had taken unusual pleasure in waiting for the denouement he figured was bound to come when the affairs of the Fourth

National were thoroughly investigated. John Field, having worked out a puzzle, had a natural desire to see whether his analysis was correct.

And still nothing of this showed on his emotionless face as his cold, pale eyes rested on the bundle of bank notes young Joseph Drum had just tossed upon his desk. The glance he cast the young man was quite as casual as it had been throughout their many transactions, dating from some months back from the petty stock dabbling period and now culminating in this plunge order.

"Seventy-five thousand dollars cash. Buy one hundred thousand C—"

He took a curiously snaky delight in drawing the order aloud, leaning back in his chair and indulging in a gust of silent laughter as the teller hurriedly shuffled out the door.

His silent chuckle was checked by the abrupt entrance of President Darius Brown—another part of the jigsaw puzzle from the working out of which the dealer in problems had gained such keen delight. The bank-

"Well, you're nailed hard, old man, and you've got to make a clean-up to break loose. That's all I can see to do, believe me, if there's a loophole from any scrape I don't need a spyglass to find it. You've got six hundred beans and you've gotta have ten thousand dollars. Take a chance—that's the only answer."

"It's the only way I can see."

"Sure. Well, I've got a sweet little thing bottled up at this very moment, Drum. I was going down on it hook, line and sinker myself, but I'll turn it over to you. Balamour starts in the third race tomorrow. She'll be a long shot because she's a dog by birth and by performance. But she's prepped to win. The owners have been laying back months for this hog killing. Give me five hundred bucks and I'll distribute it tonight so it won't affect the betting. If she don't cop the coin or if she's disqualified, you stand about where you are."

III. Restlessly, feverishly he performed his duties the following day. The evening had been one of agony to him, the inability to meet his wife's calm, tender eyes, the failure to bring his thoughts away from the impending transaction that meant so much to him.

Belamour—on bank notes, on the paper bands that held the packages together, on his ledger, the name of the mare spelled itself out before him. On the bank steps outside he hesitated a moment.

Dark fear was tugging at his coat tails, and at the same time, urging him forward. Across the street a newsboy peddled his papers. He caught Drum's eyes and darted through the traffic toward him.

IV. BELAMOUR WINS AT 50 TO 1.

The great, black type seemed to leap from the box across the front page and strike him between the eyes. He found himself inside the cigar store without any remembrance of how he came there. He found himself listening to Fred Williams' tense, earnest voice, as he thrust a great wad of bills in his hands.

"Well, you copped the coin that time, Joe, I've used up a ton of sweat pulling for you though. You're a man and I can't talk to you like a kid but, remember, I'm in the know. I'm wise. I've lived a thousand years longer than you, and I'm wise. There is nothing to it. Nine times outta ten old Mrs. Luck would give you a kick in the slats and that's all. Clean up and drive straight. Put it up to Flo like a man and she'll understand. Come clean with her that she's gotta cut out them chorus janes and she's gotta live like a respectable banker's wife. She's been brought up in an incandescent furnace, Joe, and I never seen anybody yet that didn't get parboiled if they stuck in the oven long enough."

Drum nodded though he heard nothing of what the man said. His brain was light as a feather.

Feverishly he lunged through the crowded traffic toward his apartment house, elbowing people out of the way, forcing an entrance into the thickest jam. And then he halted, his eyes attracted by the exquisite display of a jeweler. Yes, the necklace was still there—a proper bauble to occupy the entire blue, velvet lined show window. He quickly entered the shop, chuckling to himself as he more tranquilly made his way home, the fabled box in his pocket.

He slipped up behind Flo fastening the necklace of pearls about her neck, lustreous neck, revealing in the beautiful creature's delight.

Her hand tightly clasping his they sat before the mirror, reveling in the necklace.

"Joe, dear," she clasped those thrilling fingers about his own, drawing his face very close to hers, a deep, serious light in her eyes, a sobering note of intensity in her voice, "we've always got to have money—we've got to have it. I don't think I could stand—"

"You'll never have to stand anything else, my butterfly," he laughed.

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Clean Up and Drive Straight.

er was trembling violently, shaking like an aspen as he leaned heavily upon the broker's desk.

"John," he finally managed his lips sufficiently to blurt forth. "I've got to borrow those securities for tomorrow—the securities as collateral I left with you. I only want them for tomorrow when the examiner comes. You understand?"

"I'll think it over," Field decided.

John Field leaned back in his chair and again that hint of a gleam showed beneath the pale eyes. The puzzle had been worked out to his own complete satisfaction—two thieves in one bank.

With a little chuck of annoyance he turned to his memorandum he had been making when Darius Brown burst in upon him. A second he looked puzzled, then completed it.

V. Joseph Drum stood on the bank steps, listening without a tremor to the treble of the newsboy across the street, the boy who had always before been able to cause him such terror. Yet now that he knew the worst he was cool and collected and coherent.

VI. SHARP RAID ON C. D. & E. Hundreds Sacrificing Holdings. Raid On.

Yes, he could make out every word that spelt his ruin. He even smiled as he refused to purchase a newspaper from the lad.

He reached back to feel the bulk of the automatic in his pocket. He had forgotten. He had managed to make a thorough clean-up in his department, even finishing with the revolver that belonged to the institution.

In the morning the examiner would go over his cash books.

Carefully, methodically, solicitous not to disarray any of his wife's toilet articles, he placed the ugly automatic among the delicate pieces there, then rummaged a piece of paper from the drawer and began his note of explanation.

Dearest Flo, Good-By. There Was No Other Way to—

He halted. How silly and insincere that sounded! He cuddled his brains for the proper words to convey the real meaning of such a parting. The tinkle of the phone in the living room brought a sharp exclamation of impatience from him as it insistently obtruded upon his mental effort. Reluctantly he picked it up, his voice cool and collected. A slight smile parted his lips as Field announced himself.

"Yes, I know," his lips moved.

"I have just closed your C. D. & E. with one hundred thousand dollars' profit, Mr. Drum. Is that correct?"

"Quite correct," the teller quietly answered then. Just send it to my apartment by messenger—immediately. One hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, I believe."

Coolly he replaced the receiver on the hook, then moving to Flo's bedroom, methodically he tore up the note he had begun and dropped the automatic into his pocket. The mistake of John Field in buying the wrong stock did not even strike him as strange. The whole transaction seemed commonplace.

Then, like a flash it came; came with the click of the key in the lock of the door; came with the scent of

violets his wife affected. Through the portieres he could see her brother accompanied her. Their voices were lifted in angry controversy but he paid no attention to the words. A fresh panic had seized him as a harrowing problem presented: HOW TO GET THE MONEY INTO THE VAULT BEFORE MORNING?

Where his ruin had meant nothing to him, had left him cold and passionless, this problem presented itself bristlingly. His hands grasped the portieres and he would have fung himself into the living room when he halted abruptly, listening—listening—

"I tell you, Flo, you've got to can it. He's a decent guy, this husband of yours, and I'm strong for him. I wouldn't say a word if I didn't know you were kidding yourself along. I tell you it ain't possible for a bank teller to live the way Drum lives and support you the way you're supported and be on the up and up. He may have got by up to now—I ain't saying. But he can't get by long with this stuff. I tell you, and I know, I tell you straight, you're making, you have made, or you're going to make a thief outta Drum if you don't cut out the merry-merry and beat it to the bushes quick."

"A thief!" Flo's voice rose hysterically. "You've got a nerve talking about thieves, you have! You've got a nerve talking—a reformed burglar—"

The eavesdropper felt something catching in his throat—something that racked his entire body. He snatched the portieres apart, flinging himself between the angry pair.

"I am a thief!" He shouted, then, at his wife's horrified exclamation of protest; and over again he repeated it: "I am a thief—a thief—a thief—"

"What's the limit, Joe?" he demanded quietly.

"It isn't a limit," choked the teller. "I've got it all in the next room. I won, Fred, at the last minute. I won it all back. It's in the next room."

"Then what's the kick?"

"I can't get the money back—into the vault. It's got to be there in the morning—first thing. The examiner—you must get it back for me."

Williams drew away sharply as the hidden request was made. A quick shudder of repulsion shook him, but Flo's hand was upon his arm. Suddenly with an oath of capitulation, Fred Williams flung himself away from the woman.

"Hand me the coin," he grated harshly. "Hand it to me quick—before I change my mind." A bitter, grating laugh choked out of him as he pocketed the bank notes. "I'm a bit out of practice, folks, and the job's unprofessional—but—wot tell!"

VI. A long silver of orange light snatched a segment from the darkness. Once—twice—thrice—from a black window of the Fourth National it came, the watchman's signal that all was well within.

Crouching against the wall of the opposite building Fred Williams carefully, methodically upturned his coat collar and pulled the hat brim low over his eyes.

As the unsuspecting watchman leisurely opened the door, Williams sprang up close behind him, ramming the gun into the small of his back.

"Straight ahead!" he grated. "Don't turn or I'll—"

No need to finish the threat. The watchman marched slowly forward.

Carefully keeping behind the fellow even after he had bound him to the chair, gagged him securely, and tilted his hat grim so low his sight was obscured, Williams heaved a long sigh.

He then swiftly pocketed the revolver and stepped through the president's office to the black vault. A second he stood before the monstrous, grim barrier, then his delicate hands reached out and touched the nickel combination knobs.

With that chill kiss all thought disappeared, every sense was submerged in the instinct of the skilled workman, back at his job after long absence.

Now and then he paused to pare the tips of his fingers with a razor blade, that their sensitiveness might be accentuated. A long whistling sound came from his chest as the straightened, a thin smile upon his lips. A tickling hand had told him his work was half finished.

Again he bent to the work. He was swift, he was certain, he was sure. And then—

Then, without straightening his bowed back, he leaped aside, his arms instinctively rising to shield his face, his demoniacally twitching face, as he glared at the man who had interrupted him in his work, the president of the bank standing rigidly before him, too surprised for utterance.

Darius Brown's jaws, which had been loosely opened, clicked shut. The sound was audible. Williams had not before been aware that the same terror which had hurried him back before the man had put the automatic into his hand.

Came the glint of Darius Brown's nickel barreled revolver, snatched from his overcoat pocket, as he leaped at the intruder. Williams grasped the wrist of the man, trying to unnerve the fingers that clutched the gun.

For a moment the two men stood there, silently rigid.

Suddenly Williams felt the older man relaxing. He pressed his minute advantage, hurling his knee forward and up toward the president's groin. An orange spur of flame, mingling with the deep, thunderous detonation of a revolver split the silence. He

leaped aside, crouching toward the weapon he had dropped. Again Darius Brown lifted his revolver, his face twitching convulsively. His knees slowly crumbled under him and he flung up his right hand, the hand with the revolver, to recover his balance.

The motion carried him back a staggering pace. And Williams covered against the wall as, with that movement, a lurid flame, followed by plumes of acrid, biting smoke, exhaled itself from the vault door, out into the room.

President Darius Brown sagged down—down—sagged within himself like an old, worn-out accordion.

Williams approached. He was cold and passionless now. There was no time, but he could not forego looking at his work. He touched the hand, drawing away quickly as rigor mortis tainted the tendon of it. Coolly he picked up the package of securities which had dropped from the financier's pocket, turning them over curiously as though they were the most important things in the world to him. They fell from his hands as the squirmings of the bound watchman reached his ears. Snatching the bundle of money from his own pocket he dropped it beside the securities, then turned and fled.

VII. Fled—throughout the weeks and months; fled—when there was no place to flee; fled—from the voices that betrayed him, from the whispers that accused him; fled—when he prayed he might be captured; fled—from pillar to post, with no objective, with no reason for flight save the fear that impregnated the very soul of him.

A series of flat robberies punctuated his flight.

And then it came. He had not bungled the job. He had felt in advance that he was about to be caught. The plant had been laid for him by the police. His pal had been a stool pigeon.

Joseph Drum and his wife were silently seated in their living room when the haggard, haunted man burst in upon them. Since the tragedy they had been given much to silence. The fear that beset the cracksmen had not neglected them—the fear and remorse.

"They're wise to me. They nicked me on the job."

Williams laughed hoarsely, croakingly.

"There's no getaway for any of our gang," he muttered, then, his voice growing clearer, something almost prophetic gloved in the bleary eyes: "no getaway for any of us. I can't help running, but to make a getaway. I can't—we can't."

"We left a trail a mile wide," he continued more quietly. "That pearl necklace, Joe! All the coin you've spent! What Fields knows! What everybody knows about your salary! They're alive—those clues, even if a fat coroner does go to sleep on the job. They had a clear case against Brown—and he was dead. But they

gotta clear case against us, if they ever start. They ain't no getaway. They ain't—"

He halted, springing to his feet as the elevator cage clanged upon their floor and heavy steps, immediately followed by resounding blows upon the door, woke the echoes of the apartment house.

Crash—the door shivered, then slapped from its hinges before the heavily-shouldered pair who lunged into the room.

"What did he mean—about clues?" Flo whispered fearfully to her husband, an hour later. "Did he mean we might—get caught—?"

Drum sighed heavily.

"What was he running—from—al—ways?" she persisted, dully. "The verdict cleared—everything—so far as any chance of being—caught was concerned. Why did he run, Joe?"

"Not from man," his voice was laden. "From the arrows of the Almighty he ran. Haven't you felt them, Flo?"

She shivered, wishing she might meet his eyes—knowing their eyes could never meet as of old.

And that is the real affair of the Fourth National.

WHO PAYS?

(End of Story Number Three.)

The next story, "Loves Liar."

ter; and from 70,000 tons of best treated, 4,000 tons of carbonate of lime is obtained; to this 1,100 tons of clay is added, the resulting product being 3,123 tons of excellent cement.

The slum is pumped into large tanks, where it is allowed to dry partially; finely divided clay is then mixed with it; the mixture is thoroughly amalgamated by beaters for an hour and burned in a rotary kiln, much in the same way as Portland cement. The slinker is then removed and pulverized into cement.

Cement From Beets.

Excellent cement is now being manufactured by a French firm from a by-product in the process of making beet sugar. Says a writer in the Scientific American Supplement (New York, January 23):

"The slum that forms when the beets are boiled and which has heretofore been thrown away consists largely of carbonate of lime and wa-

les, and they are seeing their own country for the first time. They are going to the capital to drill in front of the church; and they are coming back, wounded, to visit the opera and the art galleries.

They are, as a matter of fact, having the time of their lives in this war, with higher wages, greater sobriety and education than their fathers have enjoyed for 900 years past. That is what this war means to them. They have lived in a hardship that makes dying in the trenches seem easy.

Those of Ivan's and Michael's kindmen who are not slain are going to assert the authority of this education and experience later on. They are never again going to be so drunken and so ignorant as they were.

The strides of the Russian people after the Japanese war were as marking time beside the pace they will assume at the close of this one. They will take the first steps in that upward climb which will place them on the mountain tops of understanding when the Teuton and the Anglo-Saxon

are doing in the comfortable dreams of age—Saturday Evening Post.

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